

SEARCH FOR SUN SMART FOREST WILDLIFE AND PLANTS



Many forest wildlife are sun safe because they protect themselves from the sun's harmful rays. As you walk through the forest, see how many sun smart animals you can find.

- Beavers** work in daylight hours and, like other animals with fur, the thick coat protects the skin from the sun's rays. On hot summer days, the large flat surface of the tail helps to keep the beaver cool.
- Brook Trout** are common in cold forest streams. Overhanging trees keep the water below 20 degrees Celsius for these cold water loving fish and help to maintain suitable oxygen levels for this sensitive species. Look for brook trout in the shade of a forest stream, away from the harsh rays of the sun.
- Coyotes and Red Fox** don't overheat in the hot sun. Instead they choose to lie in the protective shade of a well treed forest grove, and pant to cool themselves off.
- Earthworms** prefer to live most of a summer day in the dark soil. The front part of the earthworm includes light-sensitive cells. Although these cells are not true eyes, they are used as light sensitive receptors that warn the earthworms to shelter themselves in the light of the harmful rays of the sun.
- Frog Hoppers or Spittle Bugs** secrete a film of bubbles to hide themselves from animal predators and to help keep them moist in the hot sun as they cling to green plant stems in open woodland meadows.
- Mallard Ducks** often nest on the edge of a quiet forest pond. They have webbed feet that allow heat to escape from their bodies. This keeps them cool, even on a hot day.
- Painted Turtles** have shells that protect them from many predators and dangers in the natural environment, including rain and the sun's strong rays.
- Pumpkinseed Fish** won't be seen close to the forest pond surface on a sunny, hot day. Look for them in the middle water layer, away from the burning rays of the summer sun!
- Racoons and Rabbits** are nocturnal animals. This means that most of their activity is in the evening or night and they rest during the day when the sun's rays are the strongest.
- Red Bellied Snakes** know when they've had enough sun and slither under a cool pile of rocks.
- Red Squirrels** have babies that are born without any fur or hair protection. The shade of the forest trees helps to protect these squirrel infants from the harmful rays of the sun.
- Snowy Owls** sport white feathers which help to reflect ultraviolet rays from the sun.
- White Pine** is Ontario's provincial tree, a tall stately conifer with five needles in each needle bundle. Although green plants need sunlight for photosynthesis, white pine seedlings are at risk of having their new green shoots eaten by pine weevils if they receive more than 40 percent sunlight. White pine seedlings love a shady start, away from the harmful rays of the sun.
- White Tailed Deer** avoid the peak hours of the sun. Most of their activity is in the cooler early morning and late afternoon hours.
- Wood Frogs** Summer finds woodland frogs seeking shelter for their moist skin in the damp forest floor, far from the harmful, drying rays of the sun.

Just like these animals protect themselves, you can protect yourself from the sun by:

- wearing sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15
- wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses
- staying in the shade

